

ANNOUNCING TRAINING USING GROUNDWATER FLOW MODELS

Educators from schools and nature centers that provide environmental training for students are invited to apply for a free groundwater flow model along with materials to expand or improve their environmental education or science education program.

Through wellhead protection funds provided to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) through the United States Environmental Protection Agency, twenty-four groundwater flow models will be awarded to Wisconsin schools and nature centers in January 2007. The model is a plexiglass tank filled with sand that enables students to "see" groundwater – Wisconsin's "buried treasure." A picture of and information about the model are at www.uwsp.edu/stuorg/awra/h2omodel.html.

To be eligible to receive a model, two educators from a school or nature center must complete an application form (available at dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gw/education/2007application.pdf) describing how they would use the model in their classroom or center. If selected to receive a model, the educators must attend a one-day workshop in January at which they will receive the model and practice using it.

Who is eligible to receive these models?

Wisconsin schools and environmental nature centers educating students in grades 6-12 are eligible. This announcement is being sent to schools and nature centers in counties near the three training sites: Tomahawk, Eau Claire and Mukwonago.

Why should your school or nature center teach about groundwater?

Groundwater supplies 70% of Wisconsin's drinking water. This valuable resource is vulnerable to contamination from local land use activities. In recent years, Wisconsin has also experienced groundwater quantity problems in some areas. Teaching students - and their parents - to protect groundwater in their own communities can lead to real improvements in local groundwater quality, as well as conservation of water for the future.

What benefits are there to schools and nature centers that participate in the program?

- Schools and nature centers will receive a sand-tank groundwater flow model to keep at no cost. These models sell for \$360.
- Educators will receive ready-to-use classroom materials and training on groundwater concepts and use of the groundwater model.
- Educators will share ideas with others and return to the classroom ready to teach about groundwater.
- Schools can receive up to \$100 per participating teacher to cover the cost of a substitute teacher.

What have other model recipients said about the training?

"Attending the workshop was one of the most beneficial sources of information I have experienced in my teaching career. The groundwater model is a necessity in my environmental science classroom."

"Exceptional experience at the workshop. Very good resources/handouts. The model is a 'gold mine'."

What commitments must educators make who participate in the program?

Two educators from a school or nature center must team up to submit an application. If their application is chosen, these educators will be asked to:

- participate in a one-day training session in January 2007 to learn to use the model and to share ideas with other

educators;

- incorporate the model into their curriculum or educational programs;
- demonstrate the model and do at least two related activities with 15 or more students by May, 2007;
- perform at least one activity that has a "take-home" component to increase parent awareness; and
- complete and submit a two-page written evaluation during May, 2007.

How will model recipients be selected?

DNR staff and UW-Extension educators will review the applications and select the top eight applications for each of the three workshop locations. Criteria will include: classes, grade levels and number of students who will benefit; availability of models locally; extent to which groundwater will be incorporated into existing or new curriculum and plans to include an activity that will involve parents as well as students. Those who submit the top eight applications for each location will be notified in early December of their selection to attend the training and receive a groundwater model. Educators receiving a model would only attend one session.

Who will conduct the training sessions?

Faculty and staff from the UW - Stevens Point Center for Watershed Science and Education and the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey will conduct the training with assistance from DNR staff and UW-Extension basin educators.

When and where will the training sessions be held?

The training sessions will be Thursday, January 18th, 2007 at Treehaven near Tomahawk; Tuesday, January 23rd at Beaver Creek Reserve near Eau Claire and Tuesday, January 30th at the Nature's Classroom Institute near Mukwonago. The sessions are from 9 am - 4 pm; lunch will be provided.

What is the timeline for this project?

November 1, 2006

Applications due (available at

dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gw/education/2007application.pdf)

Early December, 2006

Educators chosen to receive training and groundwater models are notified

January 18, 2007

Training session at Treehaven near Tomahawk

January 23, 2007

Training session at Beaver Creek Reserve near Eau Claire

January 30, 2007

Training session at the Nature's Classroom Institute near Mukwonago

January - April, 2007

Educators will conduct and evaluate activities in their classes

May, 2007

Educators will be contacted by letter to evaluate their program

May - June, 2007

Schools will receive reimbursement for substitute teachers upon receipt of their evaluation report

Why is the DNR making this program available?

Groundwater is Wisconsin's buried treasure. The DNR is committed to protecting this valuable resource. Wellhead protection planning is one way a community can make sure its water supply is safe from contamination. It is the Department's hope that, by educating students and parents, communities will be able to make more informed decisions about protecting their water supply.

For further information, please contact:

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